

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING JUNE 23, 2008

### RE: TOWN OF SOUTH WINDSOR REQUEST FOR UPDATE TO 2005-2010 STATE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT POLICIES PLAN

#### South Windsor plans its future

1. Overall Planning:

- Plans of (Conservation and) Development: 1959, 1968, 1977, 1979, 1987, 1994 2002.
- Zoning 1938-present; POCDs used as references.
- Sewerage plans: 1963, 1968, 2003; Town sewerred in the 1960's, 70's using Federal, State funds.

2. Land Protection/Preservation:

- Open space subdivision regulations 30 years ago, 600+ acres of open space preserved to date.
- Open Space Master Plan: 2001, 2005. Voters approved \$12 million since 1988 for open space. State Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Program funds preserve hundreds of acres.
- Agricultural Preservation Master Plan: 1987, 1996. Have acquired large tracts of prime farmland, protected prime farmland along the Connecticut River (very high quality farmland). Currently acquiring Foster Farm, one of South Windsor's oldest operating farms.
- Bottom line: Town-owned land 1600+ acres, mostly open space.

#### State Conservation and Development Policies Plan

1. 2003 Plan update:

- South Windsor requests major revisions to correct imprecise data.
- OPM responsive but some concerns not addressed.

2. 2008 request for Plan revisions:

- Reason for requested revisions: \$9 million in Clean Water Grant Funds for sewage treatment plant upgrade, but Town not 100% consistent with the State Plan's Locational Guide Map. Costs rise by \$174,000 per month as we await resolution.

3. Reasons to amend the State Plan:

- *Imprecise statewide data, e.g., wetlands designations. Example: Residential Area H. State Plan shows wetlands, 3 Certified Soil Scientists find no wetlands.*
- *Properties developed decades ago, e.g., Industrial/Commercial Area A: 100-acre Redland Brick clay quarry, brick manufacturing plant. Brickmaking since colonial times. Old & new aerial photos show quarries. Area C includes Geisslers Plaza strip commercial shopping center built in the 1960's. Area D, trucking facility the 1960's; now Environmental Services Inc. hazardous waste clean-up facility.*
- *Properties zoned industrial or commercial decades ago. Properties zoned Industrial/Commercial for decades (generally about 50 years) along with their developed counterparts.*
- *Undeveloped property that would ideally be preserved, e.g., northeast portion of South Windsor. Town plans of conservation and development & zoned low-intensity residential uses, preservation. Purchase prices sometimes too high; developers can afford, Town can't. PZC cannot deny subdivision by developer but can do our best to preserve as much open space as possible.*

4. State Plan of Conservation & Development now used by State agencies in a manner that it was never intended to be used.

- *Plan consists of two separate but equally important parts: the Locational Guide Map AND State Action Strategies. The Locational Guide Map only a "guide" that, in current form, should not be used as a site-specific zoning map—but if it is going to be used site-specifically, critical that it be updated so it is accurate.*
- *Higher precision level required. In spite of the lack of precision, the Locational Guide Map is now applied on a property by property basis at the local level as if the data had a much higher precision than it actually has.*

# Capitol Region Council of Governments

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**TO:** CONTINUING LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON STATE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND  
DAVID LEVASSEUR, UNDERSECRETARY, STATE OFFICE OF POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

**FROM:** LYLE WRAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CRCOG

**SUBJECT:** COMMENTS ON SOUTH WINDSOR'S REQUEST FOR CHANGES TO THE CONSERVATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT POLICIES PLAN FOR CONNECTICUT, 2005-2010

**DATE:** JUNE 23, 2008

The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) has reviewed the application from the Town of South Windsor requesting an interim change to the *Conservation and Development Policies Plan for Connecticut*. The requested changes reflect the concerns of several municipalities over how state agencies currently use the State Plan's Locational Guide Map. Therefore, we offer the following comments.

The existing Locational Guide Map, similar to CRCOG's regional plan maps, is constrained by the broad scope of the data layers used to create it. Environmental data covering the entire state do not provide the most accurate information for use at a site-specific level. For example, a statewide wetlands layer is not accurate enough for use in a site plan. These data layers provide a sound basis for regional and statewide planning; however, when considering policy actions at the local or site level, the policy objectives established in the text of the *Policies Plan* should take precedence over the Locational Guide Map. CRCOG clearly indicates on its Regional Plan Policy Maps that they will be used along with the goals and policies of the Regional Plan and site-specific information to support various land use proposals. We believe this is the most appropriate use of a policy map that relies on broad datalayers, and as such, sometimes inaccurately depicts current conditions.

CRCOG understands that state agencies have recently begun to strictly interpret the Locational Guide Map in policy and funding decisions at the local level. This is problematic, as proposed actions based on local, site-specific information could support *Policies Plan* objectives, yet are stymied by a statewide map that relies on broad-level data. Some of the map areas for which South Windsor has requested changes are developed properties with existing sewer and water services, yet are marked as "preservation areas." The *Policies Plan* has several policy objectives surrounding redevelopment and focusing development in areas with existing infrastructure. This would appear to put the Locational Guide Map in conflict with the very objectives outlined in the State Plan.

Ideally, state agencies would make decisions on issues such as Clean Water Fund projects based on local information and state policy objectives. In the absence of such a guiding principle, CRCOG supports South Windsor's attempt to supplement the State Locational Guide Map with local information to ensure that policy decisions are based on accurate data.